Commonwealth of Kentucky
Energy and Environment Cabinet

Steven L. Beshear, Governor **Leonard K. Peters, Secretary**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **CONTACT: Allison Fleck, 502-564-3410**

Federal grant will help restore Kinniconick Creek

Lewis County stream degraded by sediment, erosion

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 22, 2012) -- The Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission (KSNPC) has been awarded a $342,881 federal grant to develop a sediment-focused watershed plan and stream restoration design for Kinniconick Creek in Lewis County. Northern Kentucky University Center for Applied Energy will supply the $228,587 nonfederal match, for a total project cost of $571,468.

The KSNPC was one of 11 communities and organizations around the state selected this year for funding through Section 319(h) nonpoint source pollution control grants for the development of watershed management plans and implementation of nonpoint source pollution controls. This year, a total of $2.9 million was awarded for the grants, which will be administered by the Kentucky Division of Water (DOW).

Kinniconick Creek is 99 miles long, which is one mile short of achieving river status. From river mile 6 to its headwaters, the “Kinney,” as the locals call it, has been designated as an Outstanding State Resource Water (OSRW) for its scenic, recreational, fisheries and wildlife values. It provides habitat for one federally endangered species (Virginia spiraea) and several state-listed species. Animals or plants are classified as endangered if they face extinction throughout all or a large part of their range.

Despite its designation as an important waterbody, current land practices in and around the project area have led to degradation through increased sedimentation and bank erosion. Increased suspended sediments cause turbidity, or cloudiness, in the water and make it difficult for sight-feeding fish and invertebrate species to catch food, hide from predators and reproduce. The suspended sediments also absorb energy from the sun, which inhibits plant photosynthesis and warms the water in the stream.

The goal of the Kinniconick project is to (1) develop stream restoration conceptual design alternatives that will protect, enhance and improve the habitat and (2) incorporate sustainable land use along the adjacent floodplain areas. In order to reach these goals, the implementation plan will identify and quantify the nonpoint source pollution sources and cultivate landowner involvement to implement best management practices that will reduce sediment runoff.

KSNPC Director Don Dott, Jr., said he hopes to use the project to demonstrate to other landowners in the watershed the value of conservation measures.

“A watershed-scale approach is needed to address the fundamental causes of bank erosion and sediment production to protect the health of the Kinniconick streams,” said Dott. “Although bank stabilization can be effective locally, we are interested in developing sustainable solutions that have wide-ranging benefits beyond a single bend or reach of the stream. A successful restoration project coupled with an educational outreach program could provide an incentive and build momentum in the community to protect this outstanding stream.”

Partners in the Kinniconick project include the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Northern Kentucky University Center for Applied Energy, University of Louisville Research Foundation and a project area landowner.

For more information about the Kinniconick Creek restoration project, contact Brent Frazier at KSNPC at 502-573-2886. For more information about the nonpoint source pollution control program, contact Jim Roe at DOW at 502-564-3410.

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